

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05

DHA-02 IO-13 /070 W

-----261424Z 124756 /53

O 261350Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1183

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 4149

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJ: RECOMMENDED DEPARTMENT PUBLIC COMMENT ON POLITICAL  
SITUATION IN PAKISTAN

1. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IN SEVERAL RESPECTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO COMMENT BRIEFLY ON THE DEVELOPING POLITICAL SITUATION IN PAKISTAN. SUCH A PUBLIC COMMENT, WHICH MIGHT BEST COME IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION, WOULD SERVE TO ASSIST US IN MEETING THE INCREASING NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS HERE THAT THE USG IS SUPPORTING BHUTTO'S OPPONENTS. IT COULD ALSO BE USEFUL AT LEAST IN SOME SMALL WAY IN FURTHERING EFFORTS BEING MADE HERE TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. IT WOULD PROVIDE AN APPROPRIATE OPPORTUNITY FOR ANTICIPATING QUESTIONS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN PAKISTAN. THE INCREASING PRESENCE OF US NEWSMEN IN PAKISTAN, REFLECTED IN STEPPED-UP COVERAGE OF PAK DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AMERICAN PRESS, ALSO MAKES THIS AN APPROPRIATE TIME FOR SUCH COMMENT.

2. WE SUGGEST THAT THE COMMENT BE ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

3. WE ARE AWARE OF ALLEGATIONS MADE IN PAKISTAN OF US INTERFERENCE IN THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL PROCESS ON BEHALF OF THE OPPOSITION. THESE ALLEGATIONS ARE OF COURSE BASELESS. THE USG HAS HAD NEITHER THE DESIRE NOR THE REASON TO MAKE ANY EFFORT TO SUPPORT PRIME  
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MINISTER BHUTTO'S OPPOSITION OR TO INTERFERE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN PAKISTAN, AND IT HAS NOT DONE SO.

4. WITH ALL FRIENDS OF PAKISTAN, WE HAVE BEEN DISTRESSED BY THE LOSS OF LIFE, THE DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY, AND THE DISRUPTION OF THE ECONOMY WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE THERE OVER THE PAST WEEKS. WE HOPE THAT THE PROLONGED POLITICAL CONFRONTATION THERE CAN

SOON BE RESOLVED. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY REPORTS THAT THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN THE CONFRONTATION HAVE RESUMED A DIALOGUE WITH ONE ANOTHER. WE HOPE THAT AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION TO THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS CAN BE FOUND SO THAT PAKISTAN CAN AGAIN ENJOY THE STABLE CONDITIONS IN NEEDS AND DESERVES.

5. (IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION.) WE FIND IT PARTICULARLY REGRETTABLE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE ARISEN WHICH HAVE LED THE GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN TO CONCLUDE THAT TO MAINTAIN LAW AND ORDER IT MUST TAKE ACTIONS RESTRICTING FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE ARRESTS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS AND THE LIMITING OF THE POWER OF THE JUDICIARY IN FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS CASES. A PROMPT SETTLEMENT OF THE POLITICAL CONFRONTATION SHOULD OBVIATE ANY NEED FOR SUCH RESTRICTIONS.

6. (IF ASKED ABOUT THE NUMBER OF DETENUS.) WE HAVE NO INDEPENDENT INFORMATION ON THE NUMBER OF THOSE ARRESTED SINCE THE CONFRONTATION BEGAN. OPPOSITION SPOKESMEN HAVE ALLEGED THAT AS MANY AS 28,000 HAVE BEEN JAILED. THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TO OUR KNOWLEDGE HAS NOT ISSUED ANY FIGURE, BUT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE INFORMALLY STATED THAT THE NUMBER ALLEGED BY THE OPPOSITION IS GREATLY INFLATED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Type:** TE  
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